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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bargaining to resume with senior firefighter personnel

The City of London and the London Professional Fire Fighters Association will go back to the bargaining table to resolve contract issues for 84 senior officers who were not part of a recent arbitrator's decision.

In January an arbitrator awarded London firefighters in suppression, training and inspection retention pay increases of 1%, 4% and 7% after 8, 17 and 23 years of service. The upper ranks, although members of the London Professional Fire Fighters Association, were not included in the arbitrator's award.

The arbitrator left the issue of retention pay for upper ranks in the hands of the City and the association to negotiate. Failure to reach a settlement will send the issue back to the arbitrator to decide.

"We will endeavor to reach a settlement in a timely and fair manner," said City CAO Jeff Fielding. "I think with goodwill on both sides we can find common ground."

Background

Retention increases of 1%, 4% and 7% were recently awarded by an arbitrator for 1st Class Firefighters, Senior Qualified Firefighters, Firefighter Apparatus Operators, Inspection and Training staff - phased in from July 1, 2006.

The arbitrator's decision on retention increases for some 84 senior fire department officers remains outstanding. Therefore, the negotiation process toward a final and complete contract that includes senior officers is still ongoing.

The precedent for retention pay for both police and fire services began in Toronto and has subsequently been awarded or negotiated in fire and police department contracts in Markham, Hamilton, Sudbury, Mississauga and Windsor.

The average salary for a first class London firefighter is comparable to 1st Class firefighters in similar Ontario cities.